

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 19, 2023

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to ask you to extend the 18-month Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) program for certain Hong Kong residents, which is set to expire on February 5, 2023.

The DED program was instituted in reaction to the erosion of rights and freedoms in Hong Kong by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Hong Kong government, including the imposition of the National Security Law (NSL), which has served as one of the main legal bases for the dismantling of democratic freedoms and the arbitrary detention and harassment of opposition politicians, pro-democracy activists, advocates for free speech and a free press, and protesters.

As documented in the 2022 Annual Report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, the Hong Kong government continues to undermine the bedrock of due process and erode the human rights guaranteed to Hong Kong's citizens under international law. It is our conclusion that human rights abuses and political persecution will continue into the indefinite future. Under the circumstances, we believe that it is essential that the DED program be extended by another 18 months at a minimum.

In fact, the need for this action continues to grow. As we speak, Hong Kong authorities are broadening the scope of repression. We are deeply concerned by reports that Hong Kong police have begun to harass family members of exiled activists and issued threats in an attempt to quash dissenting voices overseas.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with your Administration to advance our mutual interest in protecting the persecuted and advancing fundamental freedoms.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



James P. McGovern
United States Representative



Tim Kaine
United States Senator